

VA Food & Beverage Expo Tips for Exhibitors

Exhibit Design

- The average buyer who attends the Expo will probably spend from 2-4 minutes at each booth; therefore; it's important to have an attractive, eye-catching, professional exhibit that quickly and clearly highlights your products and company. (Exhibit space will be 10-ft. x 10-ft. for a single booth; 10-ft. x 20-ft. for a double.)

What Buyers Want

- Be prepared to convey all the particulars on how to order your product, what it costs, the shipping arrangements, expected delivery, and what type of promotions (such as demos, tastings and point-of-sale items) you can offer to help buyers sell your product to their customers.
- As well, be prepared to explain production processes and ingredients as well as details about your company.
- New products, gift packs, professionally printed labels and attractively packaged products will draw attention.

Pre-Show Promotions

- One month before the Expo, exhibiting Virginia companies will receive a list of buyers registered to attend so that you can contact them before the show and give them a reason to come by your booth. Examples: Invite them to register for a random drawing for a sample pack of products or other prize. Offer shipping discounts on orders placed by first-time buyers. Include free point-of-sale items on all orders placed during the Expo. Develop other incentive ideas.

Booth Staff Training

- Staff members who man your booth at the show should be comfortable *engaging* perfect strangers in conversation about your products and company. Staff should show passion and enthusiasm for your products and be educated about your company and your products. They need to quickly provide information about company origin, production processes, shelf life and shipping methods, etc. Train staff on booth etiquette and best practices in order to make visitors feel welcome.

What to Bring

- Give thoughtful consideration to the items you will need for an effective show, and make a check list for the packing process. (This list can be used for other shows, as well.) Be sure to bring more business cards, company brochures/catalogs, product literature, price sheets, recipes, serving utensils, etc. than you think you will need. You may want to throw in a roll of paper towels and/or wipes for unexpected spills or messes. There are no guarantees

that the show facility will have access to copiers or be located near any copy centers or grocery stores.

- If you plan to use anything electrical in your booth, bring an extension cord.
- If you have lots of boxes to bring into the show, a small flat bed or hand truck can save strain on your back and extra steps.
- Don't wait until the last minute to pack, in case something unexpected occurs.
- It is advisable to arrive early for show set-up to allow time for any changes and to manage unforeseen problems. (Set-up times will be announced in exhibitor information packets mailed in October.)

Lead Management

- National research reveals that almost 80% of the leads generated at a trade show are never followed up afterwards. Before you even get to the show, have a plan in place to follow up on show leads so that you can respond to them appropriately and promptly.